

**National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Invitational Conference
“Institutions of Higher Education & NBPTS: Renewal for Some, Change for Others”
March 6-8, 2008, Hotel Palomar, Washington, D. C.**

More than 150 administrators and faculty from institutions of higher education (IHE) as well as National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) and other professional development providers attended this conference sponsored by NBPTS. Conference participants were provided with an awareness and clarity on higher education accountability issues. They also defined terms relating to professional development and standards; reflected on best practices; and, assessed, renewed or changed their alignment with NBPTS Standards. Some highlights of the featured sessions include:

Quality Indicators for Initial and Advanced Teacher Professional Development

Arthur E. Levine, president, the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, told participants that the nation’s teachers are not prepared for the various economic, demographic, technological, and globalization changes affecting students and schools. He suggested redeveloping teachers “for a new era” and suggested that we create teacher education professional schools and teaching fellowships, and that we highlight model teacher education programs. Levine said, “We need NBPTS, because we can build on its history of high standards that have been a basis for the accreditation of teacher preparation institutions.”

The Assessment of Quality Teaching and the Value Added of NBPTS for IHEs

Gary Galluzzo, professor, George Mason University, asked conference participants if their teacher education programs

- 1) have a conception of how teachers learn best;
- 2) recognize that teachers are working in laboratories with real problems to solve;
- 3) have course assignments that require teachers to think deeply about what they do; and
- 4) look at teachers as agents of change, and teach teachers to look inside their schools?

Les Sternberg, dean, College of Education, University of South Carolina, emphasized that IHEs and NBPTS are equal partners in these endeavors, and asked participants to think whether they were using National Board Standards as evaluation instruments or professional development. Gail V. Ritchie, NBCT, instructional coach, Fairfax County (Va.) Public Schools, was instrumental in designing an advanced master’s degree program at George Mason University. She said that National Board Standards and assessments are regarded both as a recognition of accomplished teaching and as excellent professional development for teachers.

Clients, Climate, Culture and Community

Portia Holmes Shields, CEO, Concordia College, stressed that effective school reform must address the clients--students, and their climate, culture, and community. She encouraged participants to raise teaching to such a level as to create a “revolution of the spirit,” and told participants to make practical applications of elements of their students’ culture, e.g., hip-hop music.

Recruiting, Retaining and Assisting Teachers in High-Need Schools

Joyce Loveless, NBCT, executive director, Program Access and Equity, NBPTS, said that we must bring resources to schools and teachers, but that we should not enter the schools with the attitude that we must “fix them.” She said that there is already a lot of good going on in schools, but that teachers needed more incentives, collegial support, shared philosophies and collegiality with other teachers, a strong administration, and strong parental involvement.

Cari Klecka, assistant professor, University of Nevada-Las Vegas, and Cyndi Herron, NBCT, project facilitator, Clark County School District, Nevada, reported on their university-school district partnership in Nevada. They have created courses, candidate support, and other services for National Board candidates and NBCTs. This is not accomplished overnight, they said, and it takes a great deal of time, effort, planning, and cooperation. Conference participants were encouraged to work with their NBPTS Regional Outreach Directors, who were all present at the conference. Sheri BearKing-Baker, wellness director, United Tribes Technical College, emphasized that teachers need to work with the “whole” student, and constantly keep in mind cultural influences and the climate of learning.

Interface of Economics, Politics and Policy on Teacher Advancement

Julia E. Koppich, president, J. Koppich and Associates, said that there are many challenges in today’s schools. She suggested that NBPTS, with its 20-year history, could help IHEs by providing foundations for master’s programs, exceptional initial and continuing teacher professional development, support in low-performing schools, and even preparation for principals to be instructional leaders in their buildings.

Policies and Incentives that Support Teacher Professional Development

Richard Navarro, professor, California State Polytechnic University, spoke about the differences in state support for NBPTS throughout the country, and encouraged participants to find out more about state policies and incentives, and work to gain more of them for teachers. Boyce Williams, vice president for institutional relations, National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), presented the history of NCATE/NBPTS collaboration, and showed the inter-relationships of NBPTS Standards and Propositions, INTASC standards, and NCATE standards. She helped participants see the importance of the standards, and how they link to accreditation of teacher preparation institutions.

“The discussions generated by this conference make the case that NBPTS recognizes the importance of collaboration with higher education institutions to boost the quality of teaching in this country.” These sessions provide our critical partners with new ideas to create new opportunities for learning and success among students and teachers.”
-- Joseph A. Aguerrebere, NBPTS president and CEO, NBPTS

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